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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000824

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, S/CT; NSC FOR
E. MILLARD

LONDON FOR POL/RIEDEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05-16-13

TAGS: PGOV PTER PINS CE NO JA

SUBJECT: Norwegian FM presses Tigers, but no sign of
give yet; Latest re cohabitation stresses

Refs: Colombo 805, and previous

(U) Classified by Lewis Amselem, Deputy Chief of
Mission. Reasons: 1.5 (b,d)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: Norwegian FM Petersen met with the
Tigers on May 15. Despite his best efforts, the Tigers
did not say they will return to the talks, nor did they
commit to attend the Tokyo donors conference. The
Japanese Embassy has confirmed that it has received no
further word from the Tigers re Tokyo. In other news,
the cohabitation situation remains tense as the
president and the PM continue to bicker. Until these
snarls are cleared up, the GSL will continue to be in a
bind. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (C) NORWEGIAN FM PRESSES TIGERS: Norwegian Foreign
Minister Jan Petersen met with Liberation Tigers of
Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader V. Prabhakaran and other key
LTTE officials on May 15. GoN Deputy Foreign Minister
Vidar Helgesen and Ambassador Hans Brattskar also
participated in the meeting, which took place in the
town of Kilinochchi in the Tiger-controlled Wanni area
of north-central Sri Lanka. Petersen reportedly used
the meeting to press the LTTE to return to the peace
talks with the Sri Lankan government and to commit to
attend the June donors conference in Tokyo. In
response, the Tigers reiterated their position that
unless immediate action was taken to address the
humanitarian situation in the north, they would not go
to Tokyo or resume participation in the peace talks.
Voicing another of their long-standing demands, the
Tigers also said that the GSL must take immediate steps
to reduce the size of its security zones in Jaffna.

¶13. (C) JAPANESE MULL OVER TOKYO: In additional news re
the peace process, Koji Yagi, Japanese Embassy poloff,
told us May 16 that his government had not received any
word from the Tigers re their attendance at the Tokyo
conference. (Note: Per Reftels, Japanese Special Envoy
Akashi had set May 14 as the deadline for the Tigers to
reconsider their previous statements that they would not
attend the Tokyo meeting.) Yagi said his embassy had
heard that the LTTE might be planning to send Japan a
letter requesting a postponement in the Tokyo conference
so the GSL had "time" to meet Tiger demands. Queried as
to what the GoJ's plans were re the conference at this
point, Yagi allowed that the issue was very problematic
for his government. He said the GoJ continued to review
what to do next.

¶14. (SBU) TAMIL POLITICIANS MEET THE LTTE: In other
news re the peace track, a group of Tamil National
Alliance (TNA) politicians met with the LTTE leadership
in the Wanni on May 13. After the meeting, a joint
LTTE-TNA statement was issued that stressed the LTTE's
continued support of a negotiated political settlement
of the dispute. Re the peace talks and the Tokyo
conference, Mission has heard that the Tigers used the
meeting with the TNA to reiterate their well-known
stance that the GSL had to meet their demands before
they agreed to cooperate.

¶15. (C) COHABITATION BICKERING CONTINUES: The latest
news re Sri Lanka's tense cohabitation situation is that
President Kumaratunga has sent a letter to Prime
Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on May 14 stating that she
would not change her decision re the takeover of the
Development Lotteries Board. (Note: Late last week,
per Reftels, the president announced that she was taking
over the lotteries board. The GSL has refused to
implement her decision.) Further, she rejected the PM's
allegation that the takeover violated the Sri Lankan
Constitution, asserting that she had acted in full
conformity with the law. In terms of next moves in the
tense situation, the PM is reportedly drafting a
response to Kumaratunga's latest missive. There are
also reports that President Kumaratunga, in a bid to
show she has control of the agency, is planning to call
for an emergency meeting of the directors of the

lotteries board soon.

16. (C) COMMENT: Until the snarls over the peace process and cohabitation are cleared up, the GSL will continue to be in a serious bind. The LTTE is clearly not in the mood to make things easy for it in terms of the peace track. In the meantime, the president is causing the GSL serious problems with respect to politics in the south. Even when things were going more smoothly, the GSL was overloaded enough. The weight of these added problems makes the overall challenge for the GSL that much larger. END COMMENT.

17. (U) Minimize considered.

WILLS